A large number of items for exports from India like engineering goods, automobile ancillaries, electronic components, computer software and agro-marine products have been indentified and, similarly, for imports from Canada, items, like electronic technologies, sophisticated electrical components, telecommunications equipment and technologies have been identified as potential areas for increasing the bilateral trade.

At the 8th Engineering Trade Fair held in February, 1989 in New Delhi more than 30 Canadian firms participated and brought to India a cross section of Canada's industry and technology. The Minister of Industry, Trade and Technology, Government of Ontario, visited India on this occasion. During discussions with him, further areas for co-operation were identified for promoting trade between the two countries.

Master Plan to check soil erosion by Ganga in the districts of Murshidabad and Howrah in West Bengal

3539. SHRI CHITTA BASU: Will the Minister of WATER RESOURSES be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the West Bengal Governmnet have recently sent a Master Plan with an estimated cost of Rs. 15 crores to check soil erosion by Ganga in the districts of Murshidabad and Howrah in West Bengal; and

(b) if so, what action Government have taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF WATER RESOURCES (SHRIMATI KRISHNA SAHI): (a) No such scheme has been received at the Centre.

(b) Does not arise.

Death of handloom weavers and cotton growers in Andhra Pradesh

3540. DR. YELAMANCHILI SIVAJI: Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a number of handloom weavers and cotton growers end d their life due to hardships in Guntu Prakasam and Krishna districts of Andhra Pradesh sometime back; if so, what steps are being taken by the Central Government to mitigate their hardships: and

(b) how much money was allotted by the Central Government to rehabilitate the handloom weavers and cotton growers who are in distress and what steps Government have taken to augment the exports of handlooms and to maintain the preeminence of cotton, as envisaged in the textile policy of the Government of India?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF TEXTILES (SHRI RAFIQUE ALAM): (a) Thirty persons connected with the handloom sector are reported to have died on account of suicide, accident and natural death in Guntur, Prakasam and Krishna districts. The conditions of the handloom weavers in these districts are reported to have been adversely affected mainly by the slump in demand for lungies and other varieties of handloom cloth due to competition from producers of lungies in neighbouring States as well as reduced demand of lungies from Burma and Bangladesh. The Central Government had deputed an officer of the Handicrafts and Handlooms Export Corporation of India (HHEC) to examine the possibility of providing export avenues of these areas. After discussions with the State Government authorities, HHEC has placed sample orders to the weavers agencies in the concerned areas.

(b) The Central Government has released an amount of Rs. 60.00 lakhs as special advance for providing gainful employment to the unemployed weavers as a measure of ameliorating the distress conditions of the handloom weavers in Prakasam, and Guntur districts. Under the Centrally Sponsored Intensive Cotton Development Programme (ICDP) funds to the tune of Rs. 56.17 lakhs have been provided to Andhra Pradesh for the benefit of the cotton growers during the VII Five-Year Plan (1985-90).

The steps taken by Government to augment the exports of handlooms are setforth in the attached statement. (*See* be-